Saigon's Ironic Cabinet Crisis on the Eve of Manila, Pps. 2-3

How to Make A Sharply Growing Escalation Look Like Practically None at All

"I see no reason to expect any significant increase in the level or tempo of operations in South Vietnam."
—*McNamara on returning from Saigon Oct. 14*

"In talking with reporters in Washington on Friday McNamara observed that barring an unforeseen turn of events 'there is no need for a SUBSTANTIAL [our emphasis—IFS] increase in the rate of deployment.' Since we have deployed 180,000 troops to Vietnam in the last 12 months [and 245,000 in the last 15] the Secretary could be anticipating a very large increase by this time next year even if there is no increase at all in 'the rate of deployment'." —*Washington* Sunday Star *News Review Oct. 16*

I. F. Stone's Weekly

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While Others Dodge the Draft, Bobby Dodges the War

Robert F. Kennedy is not setting a good example for American youth. To be a trimmer, to put career ahead of duty, to be all but silent on the greatest moral and political issue of our time is to be no different from the other politicians. We are sure that if a young man went to the Senator and asked his advice on how best to dodge military service in Vietnam, Kennedy would regard him as a coward and unpatriotic. But we are also sure that if we had the Senator's confidence and asked him privately why he was *not* speaking out on the war, he would explain it was too risky, that he had already established a position slightly to the left of the Administration in his Vietnam speech of last Feb. 19, that this was sufficient to hold his liberal constituency and that anything more would be politically dangerous, and might put him in the isolated position of a Morse or Gruening. To die for your country is one thing. To put your political future in jeopardy for it is another.

A Moral Man Where It's Politic

These are roles we take for granted in the ancient dramaturgy of human conflict. Honor requires the soldier to kill or be killed, whatever his scruples. But it is not regarded as dishonorable for the politician to swallow his misgivings and allow the young to go out to die without protest. Kennedy in the U.S. Senate has at his disposal a forum second only to that of the Presidency. But he hasn't said a word about the war in the Senate since his one speech last February. A wistful committee has been organized for a Kennedy-Fulbright ticket in 1968 but Fulbright has been speaking out while Kennedy has been falling silent. Kennedy did not support his effort to rescind the Tonkin Bay resolution nor to alert the country on the danger in Thailand. He even achieved the feat of delivering a speech on peace in New York Oct. 11 without mentioning Vietnam!

Kennedy thinks of himself as a moral man. He proclaims it in South Africa and in Latin America but at home, where thousands are being drafted every month, he says as little as he can about the one issue that matters most. It is only in response to questions that he occasionally speaks of the war, often with a remarkable complacency. "We have to realize," he told a questioner in Iowa (*New York Times,* Oct. 10), "that the casualties are going to continue to be large." Shouldn't he, who sees himself as the candidate of youth, do something to stop them? He has a small army of ghost writers turning out speeches and hunting up apt quotations. Why not on the war?

At Hunter College in New York recently he confined himself, as Brother Teddy does, to the safe topic of aid to Vietnamese refugees. He met "all questions on the propriety of the war in Vietnam," the *New York Times* reported Oct. 8,

(Continued on Page Four)

McNamara, The Negro And His Army Education

Nothing is harder to pry out of the Pentagon than figures on the Negro in the Vietnamese war. So Neil Sheehan's dispatch in the New York Times Oct. 16 was something of a feat. It reported about 33% of the 400,000 draft rejects to be taken by the armed services this year by lowering mental standards will be Negroes. It discloses that despite McNamara's speech last August describing this as an element in the War on Poverty program, in which the men would benefit by special educational training, there are neither funds nor plans for any such programs. "Officers believe the men will end up in the more rudimentary jobs," Sheehan wrote. "In the Army, which will take the greatest number, this will mean combat arms for the most part." This will mean more Negroes in Vietnam. Sheehan's dispatch revealed that of all Army enlisted men killed in Vietnam during 1965, 23.5% were Negroes, or more than twice the 11% ratio of Negroes to total population. If these figures have educational value, it is not the kind McNamara intended.

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Saigon's Cabinet Crisis on The Eve of the Manila Conference . . .

The Cabinet crisis in Saigon couldn't have come at a happier moment than on the eve of the Manila conference. The Ky regime is supposed to take over pacification, presumably leaving the heavy fighting to U.S. troops. But Ky seems unable to pacify his own hand-picked Cabinet. The issue in the Cabinet crisis is as if ironically made to order for the purpose of illuminating the mythical character of our official view of the war. Watch closely.

Both Sides Northern Led

The "irreducible" minimum of U.S. policy, as Bobby Kennedy himself phrased it in his speech last February, is that "we will not turn South Vietnam over to the North." But six southern members of Ky's Cabinet are threatening to resign because they resent Northern domination. "The seven most powerful figures in Ky's regime," Richard Critchfield cabled the *Washington Star* (Oct. 16) from Saigon, "are all refugees from North Vietnam." Five, he added, including Ky himself, are graduates of North Vietnam's Nam Dinh Military Academy. In supporting the Ky regime we have turned the South over to a Northern dictatorship.

The Cabinet crisis provides a sardonic background to the picture Johnson drew on leaving for Manila: "A small Asian nation is under attack." The true picture emerging is of a small Asian nation torn in two between two rival sets of Northern leaders, one in Hanoi (where several are Southerners) and the other in Saigon. American power has been thrown behind one set against the other. This is clearly civil war.

Johnson said in Hawaii that Asians "want, above all, to have a voice in their own destiny." But the South Vietnamese voices in the Cabinet crisis have been stilled by censorship. Not a line has been allowed to appear about it in Saigon's gagged press. Somehow freedom of the press has never been included in the freedom we have been defending all these years in South Vietnam.

The immediate issue behind the crisis was the arrest of a Southern sub-Cabinet officer by Brig. Gen. Nguyen Ngoc Loan, a Northerner who is head of both police and military security and thereby perhaps the second most powerful man in the country. Eleven of the 12 Southern civilian members of the Cabinet protested to Ky that Loan was trying to set up a police state.

Another and deeper issue seems to lie behind the crisis. My first clue to it was a dispatch in *Le Figaro* (Oct. 11) which said that the sub Cabinet officer arrested by Gen. Loan had been accused of *"manoeuvres separatistes sudistes."* (Southern separatist maneuvers.) I also noticed in the *Saigon Post* (Oct. 13) that Ky's Armed

Dedicated to the Ft. Hood Three

"In early Christian times a soldier, Theodore, told the authorities that being a Christian he could not bear arms, and when he was executed for this the responsible authorities quite sincerely regarded him as a madman and far from trying to conceal such an occurrence, exposed him to public scorn at their execution. But now when cases of refusals of military service occur more and more frequently, these cases are no longer regarded by the authorities as madness, but as a very dangerous awakening from madness, and the governments far from holding such cases up to public scorn carefully conceal them, knowing that the salvation of men from humiliation, enslavement and ignorance, will come about not by revolutions, trades-unions, peace-congresses, and books, but in the simplest way — by each man who is called upon to share in the infliction of violence on his fellow men and on himself, asking in perplexity: 'But why should I do this?'"

—Tolstoy: The Kingdom of God Is Within You (1893)

In A Speech Few Papers Covered, Fulbright Asks The No. 1 Question for Americans

"The question for Americans today is whether we want our country to be the world's policeman or an intelligent and humane society whose principal contribution to the outside world has been the power of its example. It is said that we are so rich and strong that we can be the world's policeman and build the Great Society at the same time. Things certainly are not working out that way. The 89th Congress lost interest in the Great Society and became a 'war Congress.' On Oct. 5 I noticed two headlines. One said 'Rise In War Cost Reaches A Peak'; the other, 'Senate Passes Anti-Poverty Bill; $746 Million Cut.' Since we do not feel able to economize on military expenditures and are unwilling to reduce spending on such a life-and-death matter as beating the Russians to the moon—at a cost of $20 to $50 billion—we are requiring the poor and the schoolchildren of America to pay the cost.

"The inspiration and commitment have disappeared from the Great Society, not only because of pressures on our material, but also for lack of mental and spiritual, resources. Politicians, like other people, have only one brain apiece and it stands to reason that if they spend all their time thinking about one thing they are not going to be thinking about something else. The President simply cannot think about implementing the Great Society at home while he is supervising bombing missions over North Vietnam. Just as there is something unseemly about an individual carrying all the burdens of the Community Chest and the PTA while his own children run wild, there is also something unseemly about a nation conducting a foreign policy that involves it in the affairs of most of the nations in the world while its cities are wracked by violence, its streets choked with traffic, its rivers open sewers and its air unfit to breathe."

—Fulbright at Kansas State College Oct. 14 (Abridged)

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. . . Enables All To See How Clearly This is a Civil War In Vietnam

Forces Council after a two-day meeting voted unanimously for an invasion of the North to liberate "the entire country". It also voted not to accept Communist or neutralist elements within the government.

What the "Separatists" Want

Now a powerful group of some 5,000 aristocratic absentee landlords in Saigon under the leadership of Tran Van Van, who was elected to the Constituent Assembly, have been pursuing a political course which is diametrically the opposite of this. They want peace and they want an independent South Vietnam. They talk of linking it economically with Japan, and they hope to split the National Liberation Front. "We hope to appeal to its middle class wing," Tran Van Van told Critchfield (*Wash. Star,* Sept. 25). "The Liberation Front is a front of Southerners while Hanoi runs things from behind, just like the Northerners do in Saigon." Tran Van Van added that "With some of the Catholics, we are working to get these people in the NLF to come back on condition no neo-colonialist is elected as President." Neo-colonialist means stooge of the Americans and would exclude both Ky and Thieu, the present Chief of State. This program begins to dovetail with the offer made in the latest interview Wilfred Burchett had with the head of the NLF, which is ready to form a broadly based South Vietnamese government, excluding only "neo-colonialists" like Ky and Thieu.*

The "separatists" would end the civil war, form a coalition with neutralist if not Communist elements, throw off control of the Northerners in Saigon, end the ambition of the Ky crowd to conquer the North and allow the people of the South in Johnson's words "to shape their own destiny." This is exactly what we claim to be fighting for but needless to say the U.S. is on the other side.

Whether or not we support Ky's dream of "liberating" the North, we don't want any kind of neutralist regime in the South. Ky with our backing will be able to crush "separatism" at home and continue a war which he hopes to widen. He and the other Northern generals resemble Chiang Kai-shek in his desire to regain his old home on the mainland in that older and bigger Asian civil war. If we brush away the cobwebs of propaganda, we can see that the U.S. has committed itself to one side in a Vietnamese civil war as it has to one side in the Chinese civil war. In both cases the civil war has given us a means of establishing bases in Asia, one offshore in Formosa, the other on the mainland in Vietnam.

White House Fiction Too Much Even For Ky

"Saigon, Oct. 11—President Johnson recently made public a report by White House Assistant Robert Komer telling of 'impressive' progress in the 'rural development' program—otherwise known as pacification. . . . The Ky regime is operating under no such illusions. Ky himself recently sent top officials a detailed report. . . . It admitted corruption . . . and conceded that pacification now was little more than a paper program."

—R. H. Shackford, Washington Daily News, Oct. 11

*** Secret negotiations may be underway. Critchfield reported in the same dispatch, "According to reliable American sources, an Under Secretary of Hanoi's Foreign Ministry did actually slip into Saigon for talks a few months ago, though no one will admit seeing him."**

White House Fiction and A Congressional Investigation of The "Other War" in Vietnam

"South Vietnam is increasingly coming to grips with the need to modernize its society, bolster its civil economy, develop its representative institutions, and provide a better life for its people. . . . On land reform, the GVN is proceeding with distribution of 1.2 million acres.

"Our efforts will not end when Communist aggression ceases, but will remain as the foundation of a modern nation."

—Report on the progress since Honolulu in the "other war" in Vietnam by R. W. Komer, the ex-CIA man who is Johnson's coordinator for "pacification" as released by the White House with much fanfare, Sept. 13.

"Twelve years have elapsed since we began contributing economic assistance and manpower to South Vietnam. Yet that nation continues to face political instability, lack a sense of nationhood, and to suffer social, religious and regional factionalism and severe economic dislocations. Inflation continues to mount, medical care remains inadequate, LAND REFORM IS VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT [emphasis added], agricultural and education advances are minimal, and the development of an honest, capable and responsible civil service has hardly begin."

—"Additional views" filed by Congressmen Donald Rumsfeld (R. Ill) and Robert Dole (R. Kan) to the report Oct. 12 by the House Foreign Operations Subcommittee under Chairman John E. Moss (D. Cal) on the waste and pilferage in the U.S. Assistance program in South Vietnam. The three Republican minority members (including Ogden Reid of New York, see below) felt that the report failed to touch on "the broader problem" in South Vietnam.

"Representatives of the merchant and landowning families are entrenched in various strata of this bureaucracy. Under present circumstances, their position is so solidified that even after the cessation of military hostilities, they may be able to prepetuate their control. If this is permitted to happen . . .the Vietnamese population will have little opportunity to raise their standard of living."

—Additional views of Reid to the House report above

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Johnson Was More Fervent About Peace in 1964 Than Kennedy in 1966

(Continued from Page One)

"with an appeal for the students to acknowledge that was a subject separate from providing relief for noncombatants hurt by the war." It is indecent to talk of helping the refugees while keeping silent about the napalm and the saturation bombings that make a hell of their lives. He would go no further than to say, coyly, "You are aware that I have some reservations about our role in Vietnam." This drew the biggest applause of the evening, but it is time Kennedy stopped getting cheers for such tepid observations. The students cheered because they were hungry for a word against the war and because they had faith in Kennedy. But he betrays their faith, by playing skilful politics on the issue that may mean life or death for them. We are glad to see that he was heckled in Chicago and met with signs saying, "Kennedy and Douglas Support Mass Murderers in Vietnam." There, too, in the same equivocal vein as at Hunter, he said he "happened to have some disagreements with President Johnson on Vietnam." (*Wash. Post,* Oct. 16). Is he saving them for his memoirs?

What Is Kennedy's Game?

Wm. V. Shannon in *Harper's* for October says he is out for the Vice Presidency in 1968. "With skilful publicity," Shannon writes, "this could be made to appear not as an act of bold usurpation and impatient ambition by Kennedy but a reluctant rescue mission to prop up an aging wartime President whose popularity is sagging." Just as Johnson moved left to outflank Goldwater, with whom he had been allied in the Senate, so Kennedy moved left to outflank Humphrey and take over the latter's liberal constituency. But he is careful not to get so far out as to break his ties with the White House.

We do not mean to imply that Kennedy is insincere. We only note that the liberal views he has adopted also serve his political purposes. Nor do we mean to say that he is not troubled by the war. We believe he is. But he is not troubled enough to risk a confrontation with Johnson. In a *Wall St. Journal* (Oct. 17) survey of Bobby's campaign activities one can see how little he deals with any concrete issues in those tours which have the bobby-soxers squealing. As for the war, that paper noted "Actually Mr. Kennedy has been careful of late to avoid sharp attacks on the President. When he expressed doubts about Vietnam policy, he always stresses that 'these are very complex problems, with no simple solutions'." Johnson was for peace, too, before he won election. What guarantee that Kennedy would prove any better, under the enormous pressure of the military bureaucracy, if his convictions are already so feeble, his mind so divided?

The VC Must Be Using Our Army Manuals

"Saigon (UPI)—Viet Cong guerrillas used civilians as human shields to escape a fight with American paratroopers today." —*Washington Daily News, Oct. 13*

"On entering the village. . . . Utilize villagers to precede the entrance of troops."

—Advice on warfare in Vietnam. Army Digest, August 1966, P. 34.

We also note that this same article, in discussing the problem of ferreting out Vietcong in occupied villages, says "Training must be conducted to overcome the inhibitions that the average American has about violating the right of private property. They should be trained to search thoroughly without reservation." We hope this does not spark an investigation of the Pentagon by the Un-American Activities Committee.

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